

the religion of their choice. That is why, in order to do away with all disquietude and equivocation for the future, we have resolved to publish this edict, by which all are to understand that those who wish to follow this sect have full liberty to do so, and that, by the indulgence of our Majesty, each man may practise the religion he prefers or that to which he is accustomed.

" It is also permitted to them to rebuild the houses of the LOUD. Moreover, so that there may be no mistake about the scope of our indulgence, we have been pleased to order that all houses and places, formerly belonging to the Christians, which have either been confiscated by the order of our divine parents, or occupied by any municipality, or sold or given away, shall return to their original ownership, so that all men may recognise our piety and our solicitude."

The bigot must have been brought very low and reduced to the last depths of despair before he set his seal to such a document as this. One can see that it was drawn up by Maximin with a copy of the Edict of Milan before him, and that he hoped, by this tardy and clumsy recognition of the principle of absolute liberty of conscience for all men, to make the Christians forget his brutalities. Doubtless, the Christians of Cilicia and Syria looked to Constantino in far off Gaul as a model prince and emperor, and heard with joy of the steady advance of Constantino's ally, Licinius. The latter would come in their eyes in the guise of a liberator, and prayers for his success would be offered up in every Christian church of the persecuted East. Maximin sought to repurchase their loyalty : it was too late. His absurd pretext that his